2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

jobs in the vineyards must be finished quickly so that the men of the household may turn to plowing cotton fields, those farmers who prefer to start plowing earlier, or who have larger vineyards than the household can handle alone, sometimes hire labor for the hoeing. Sons who are not needed on their father's land may work for others in the village or may go for several days to work for relatives living in neighboring villages. In either case, they are paid a daily wage of between forty and sixty drachmas (thirty drachmas equal one dollar) and get their board as well. It requires three man-days of labor to hoe one *strema* of vineyard. Hiring labor for this is considered expensive. Farmers with fewer land resources may, in order to avoid the extra expense, ask their wives to do some hoeing. Although such a procedure is frowned on in Vasilika, a farmer considers the practical necessities of his situation as more important than any possible loss of prestige. Moreover, village opinion itself recognizes the force of a man's practical needs, and tempers criticism to the nature of the specific circumstances. This phenomenon is characteristic of Vasilika and will be mentioned again.

The vines continue to need some attention from time to time until the grapes have ripened. Wine-making begins in September with the gathering of the grapes. September itself used to be called *triyitis* (the time of the grape harvest). It is an occasion much enjoyed, since men, women, and children all pick the grapes together, talk and joke as they do so, and eat a little of the produce besides. Four or five people can pick the yield of the two *stremata* in a few hours. The pack animals carry baskets of grapes back to the house. After making certain that there are no leaves among the fruit, the men of the household wash their feet and then trample the grapes. The must collects in shallow basins and is transferred to barrels. A sample of must from each barrel (the usual household's yield is two barrels) is taken to a chemist in town to check whether sugar or alcohol or both may be needed. Payment for this service is made according to the weight of the wine the farmer will treat as a result of the chemist's advice. Besides adding the recommended quantities of sugar and white alcohol to the must, the farmers also add enough resin to make up two percent of the contents of the barrels. Resin is sold by vendors who circulate among the villages in trucks during the wine-making season. The resin gives the wine of the Greek countryside its name, *retsina,* and its characteristic flavor. In classical times the ancient Greeks and later the Romans added resin to the must as a wine preservative. It still has this function, but to the present villagers, as to the ancients, the resinated wine has a pleasing taste and, in Vasilika, is much preferred to nonresinated wines. We once started to serve a bottled Greek nonresinated wine in our village home but we were quickly informed by our village guests that it was poor indeed, and one of our visitors left the table to go home to bring a carafe of his own superior wine. Those to whom drinking a mild form of turpentine seems unpalatable at first can develop, as we discovered, a taste for *retsina* and come to enjoy it very much.

Wheat fields are plowed and sown in the fall, in late October and early November. A farmer can plow his wheat fields with a horse or two pulling a

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Kotta

[Hill Villages]

621 regretted the loss of five of his own whom the guerrillas had
161 taken. Yet he was fortunate in having one child still with him,
842 a girl who was too young to leave her mother when the guerrillas took the older children. As for the attitudes of the younger generation in the village, I could not satisfy myself. In the presence of their elders, they generally kept quiet, and certainly refrained from any overt dissent. Whether they, too, shared the traditional view that the more children one has the better off one is (assured thereby of God's blessing and of sustenance in old age), I could not tell.

CHERASIA

621 Cherasia is a village in Thessaly near the base of Mount
361 Pelion, some six air miles from Volos, the fourth city of Greece.
[491] Along the winding road, however, it lies about twelve miles from Volos; and before 1952 the only road connection with the village required a detour of about twenty-four miles around the
[173] mountain. The community is an old one. Local tradition holds that it was founded 680 years ago. Until the Germans destroyed
[433] the "upper" village in 1943, the community led a semi-migra-
[233] tory life, spending the summer months high up the mountain where a natural spring supplied water, and coming down to the foot of the mountain only in winter, when the flocks could pasture on the stubble of other villages' grain fields. The villagers looked upon the upper village as their real home, the lower one as only a temporary shelter.

x 178 The traditional occupations of the village were sheepherding
433 and charcoal burning. Once upon a time, sixty or seventy years
233 ago, the main support of the community may well have been
314 sheep, pastured on the rough mountain in summer, and on grain
[438] stubble in the winter. Then, by degrees, charcoal burning and woodcutting became more important. Two factors presumably

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957

EH1 Greece EH1
Cherasia

[Hill Villages]

led to this change. One was the rise of Volos as an important urban center, requiring charcoal as fuel for cooking and for heating houses. To supply the rising demand, the villagers of Cherasia began cutting off the forests of Mount Pelion with a new energy. A second factor was the growth of population in Cherasia itself. As more families appeared, sheep could not support them all, because the pastures could not be readily extended. So the people fell back on exploitation of the forests.

This "ancient" history is mostly speculation. I was not able to get any clear account of their distant past from the men of the village. What they did know was that in 1905 three families had secured title to 100 stremmata (25 acres) of land apiece in the little valley that spreads out below the site of their winter quarters at the foot of the mountain. At that time, very likely, the free villagers of the mountain saw little or no attraction in the toilsome life of a farmer, and preferred to keep to their ancient shepherd's way of life, supplemented by woodcutting and charcoal burning.

About the time of the first world war, things changed. As the population continued to grow, sheep and charcoal no longer sufficed to provide a satisfactory living for the members of the community. Many of them began to clear little patches of rocky mountainside in the hope of raising a crop or two on the land. Their tenure was legally recognized by a governmental survey made in 1922, which assigned to each family title to the patches its members had cleared and cultivated in preceding years. During the interwar period the pressure to find supplementary means of livelihood through agriculture continued to mount. In 1938, village authorities parceled out 500 stremmata of what had been common pasture to private family ownership. No further property changes had occurred in the village up to 1956.

The brute fact remains, however, that fields cleared from mountain slopes are miserable agricultural land. These produce

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Cherasia

[Hill Villages]

178 a crop of only about 30 okes of wheat per stremma (a little more
433 than 4 bushels per acre), and are capable of doing that only for
241 two or three years, after which time the field has to be aban-
423 doned for a while until its dubious fertility has been restored. The president of the village told me that he allows the villagers to clear land wherever they can find anything that seems worth clearing, even though this goes beyond the letter of the law and encroaches on what is properly common pasture.

178 The desperate effort to find more cultivable land throughout
313 the interwar, wartime and postwar years reflects the growing
314 exhaustion of the forests, upon which the majority of the village
433 population have come to depend. The villagers have cut off the trees farther and farther up the mountain, until only a little scrub oak remains; and even this is so thin that a man has to work hard and long to collect enough wood to make a charcoal
[438] burning. Since World War II, indeed, it has become more usual to sell the wood in its raw form, even though this multiplies transport problems, and means far less money per donkey-load delivered to Volos.

178 Within the village itself bitter feelings began to rise during
241 the interwar period. The three families that had turned to agri-
423 culture in 1905, thus securing possession of the only decent
565 agricultural land in the whole village, were able to keep their
578 farms together. In 1956, one of the three families had removed entirely to Volos, and was renting out its land on a sharecrop-
427 ping basis to poorer families in the village. The other two "rich" families (who by any standard other than that of Cherasia were still poor) were each represented in the village by a single household, presumably because other descendants of the original owners had left for town. The result was a striking economic contrast between the poor woodcutters, whose painfully cleared hillside patches were scarcely worth the labor of cultivation, and the "rich" families. Indeed, the members of the two village

/73 cont./ 178 476 242 874
fertilizing methods or rotation methods or introduction of new legume plants or a new variety of wheat. As a rule, their effect on the farmers is great with definite results.

Thus the future farmers of Megali Vrisi, working cooperatively, felt the need of adopting new methods and passing on to others the results of their /74/ investigations. It is surprising to know how effectively the cooperative project has tied up these fellows in undertaking to do other jobs useful for their village.

The individual project idea was a failure. People who live [621] in the same village, still under the patriarchial type of family life and whose problems are so closely interwoven, cannot help but cooperate and support whole-heartedly cooperative work. This very same idea led those boys to build a community hall 476 621 and a stage for theatrical shows. The whole structure was built by personal work and what money was saved from theatrical shows [345] at Christmas. The group learned Christmas carols and sang them [533] to every house in the village. The contributions from this event [735] were used for the poor of the village. The small reforestation project which was started by this group has led to the development [314] of the "Day of the Green", at which day everyone in the village [185] planted a tree on the hill.

The yearly athletic day event that provides an enjoyable [526] gathering for the village was planned by the young men.

/75/ One can easily foresee the future of such a community [874] which will be handled by people who learned to cooperate so well in their youth. This vocational education meant more to the lives of these young men than what they got from the grammar school.

Invasion of adult education. The Greek government, feeling 873 great responsibility toward these people, who during the wars of [658] 1912-1913, 1914-1918, and 1920-1922, lost the chance of attending schools, provided special evening lessons in each village. The lessons were handled by the teacher in the local school and thus many of these men and women had a chance to learn how